

Holter Hydroelectric Facility
House No. 1
2200 feet west of Powerhouse
Wolf Creek Vicinity
Lewis and Clark County
Montana

HAER No. MT-94-C

HAER
MONT
25-WOLCREE
1C-

PHOTOGRAPHS
HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
National Park Service
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

HOLTER HYDROELECTRIC FACILITY,
HOUSE NO. 1

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I. INTRODUCTION

Location: House No. 1 is located within the Holter Hydroelectric Facility Historic District near the small community of Wolf Creek in Lewis and Clark County, Montana. The house stands 2200 feet west of the Powerhouse in the operators' camp at the facility.

Quad: Sheep Creek

UTM: Zone 12; Easting 422920; Northing 52044470

Date of
Construction: c. 1909-10

Present The Montana Power Company
40 E. Broadway
Butte, Montana 59701

Present Use: Vacant

Significance: The Holter Hydroelectric Facility Historic District is significant as one of the most intact hydroelectric generating plants and operators' camps on the Missouri-Madison Project. House No. 1 contributes to the significance of the district as one of the most distinguished and architecturally elaborate houses built at a Madison-Missouri hydroelectric plant.

Historian: Mary McCormick
Renewable Technologies, Inc.
Butte, Montana
July 1997

II. HISTORY

House No. 1 was likely built by the United Missouri River Power Company during the first construction phase at Holter Dam in 1909-10. It then saw reuse in the construction camp when Montana Power completed work on the project in 1916-17. The house served as the residence for the superintendent over project construction (Figure 1). Not only was it the largest dwelling at the construction camp, but also the most elaborate in design and detail. Period photographs show a one and one-half-story rectangular building dominated by a massive hipped roof with hipped dormers on both the front and rear slopes (MT-94-A-7; MT-94-B-7).¹ A hipped-roof wing projected from the rear of the building, while a full-width, open porch spanned the front facade. Decorative elements included wood columns at the front porch and metal cresting at the roof ridges. The house appears to have been sheathed with wood siding.

After the Holter project was completed and put in operation, House No. 1 remained the primary residence, reserved for the foreman at the plant. Like the other construction-era buildings left in the camp, it received some improvements around the mid-1920s.² At that time, the company may have excavated a basement beneath the rear wing, and placed the entire house on a concrete foundation. The roof likely was re-surfaced as well, and exterior walls re-sided.³

For a time in the 1950s and perhaps into the 1960s, Montana Power used House No. 1 as a duplex. The interior of the building was extensively remodeled to accommodate two separate apartments. Each of these units was complete with its own kitchen, bathroom, and bedrooms. While unverified, it seems that the upper story rooms in the house were permanently abandoned at this time. This work may have included the removal of the front dormer.

III. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The operators' camp at Holter lies due west of the Powerhouse on a wide terrace backed by rolling foothills. It includes eight houses (three are non-contributing to the district), associated outbuildings, four plant and camp maintenance buildings, and a domestic water system (Figure 2). Most of the houses stand in a row and face north or northeast toward a large park that serves as a commons for the camp residents. The park is landscaped by over 150 mature trees including willows, box elders, elms, locusts and others. Each house is surrounded by a lawn, and most of them have a garden plot.

House No. 1 is a hipped-roofed cottage with some decorative details reflective of residential architecture from the early twentieth century. It is L-shaped in plan, with a one and one-half-story rectangular block (32'4" x 37'5") at the front (northeast) and a one-story wing (20'4" x 24') at the rear (southwest). The house sets on a concrete foundation. Narrow, clapboard siding at a 3" exposure clads the exterior walls. Four-inch cornerboards trim the wall

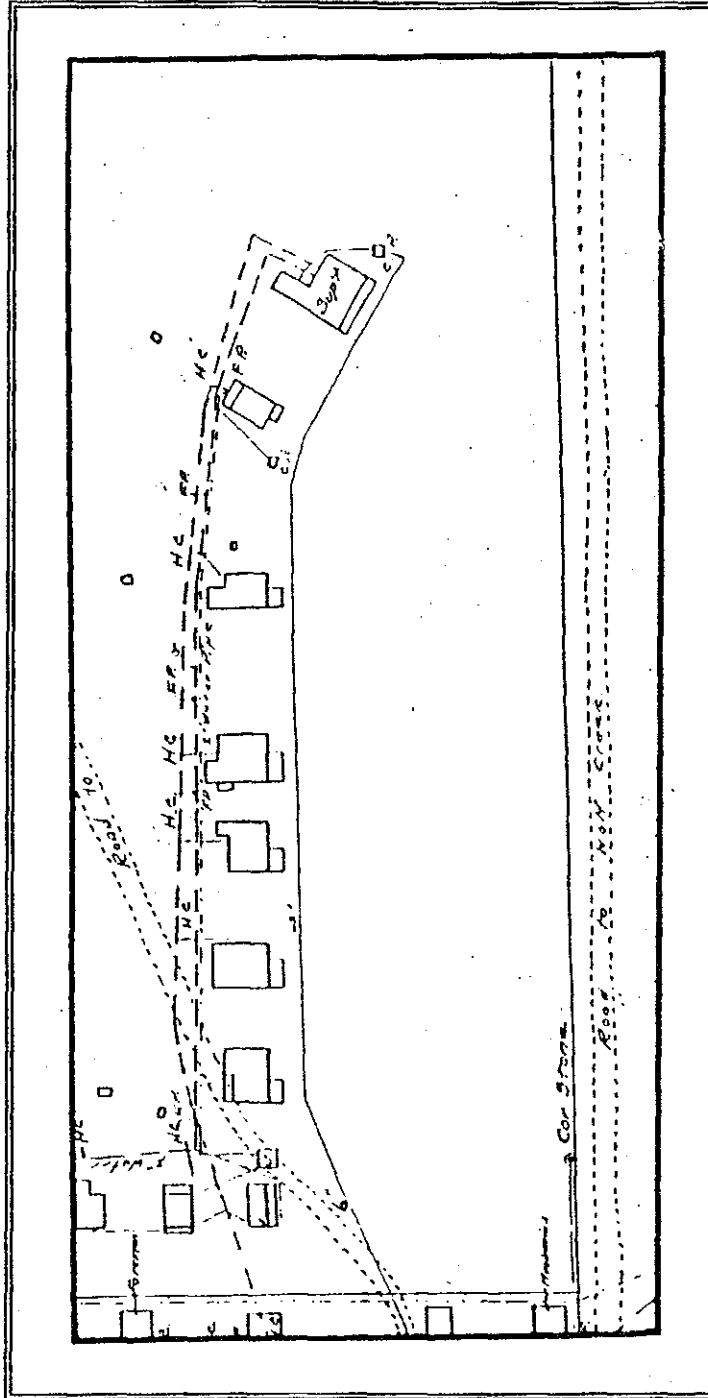


Figure 1. Portion of map reproduced on February 8, 1916 from Stone and Webster drawing. House No. 1 is the building at the far left labeled "Sup't." (MPC Drawing No. 17304-E)

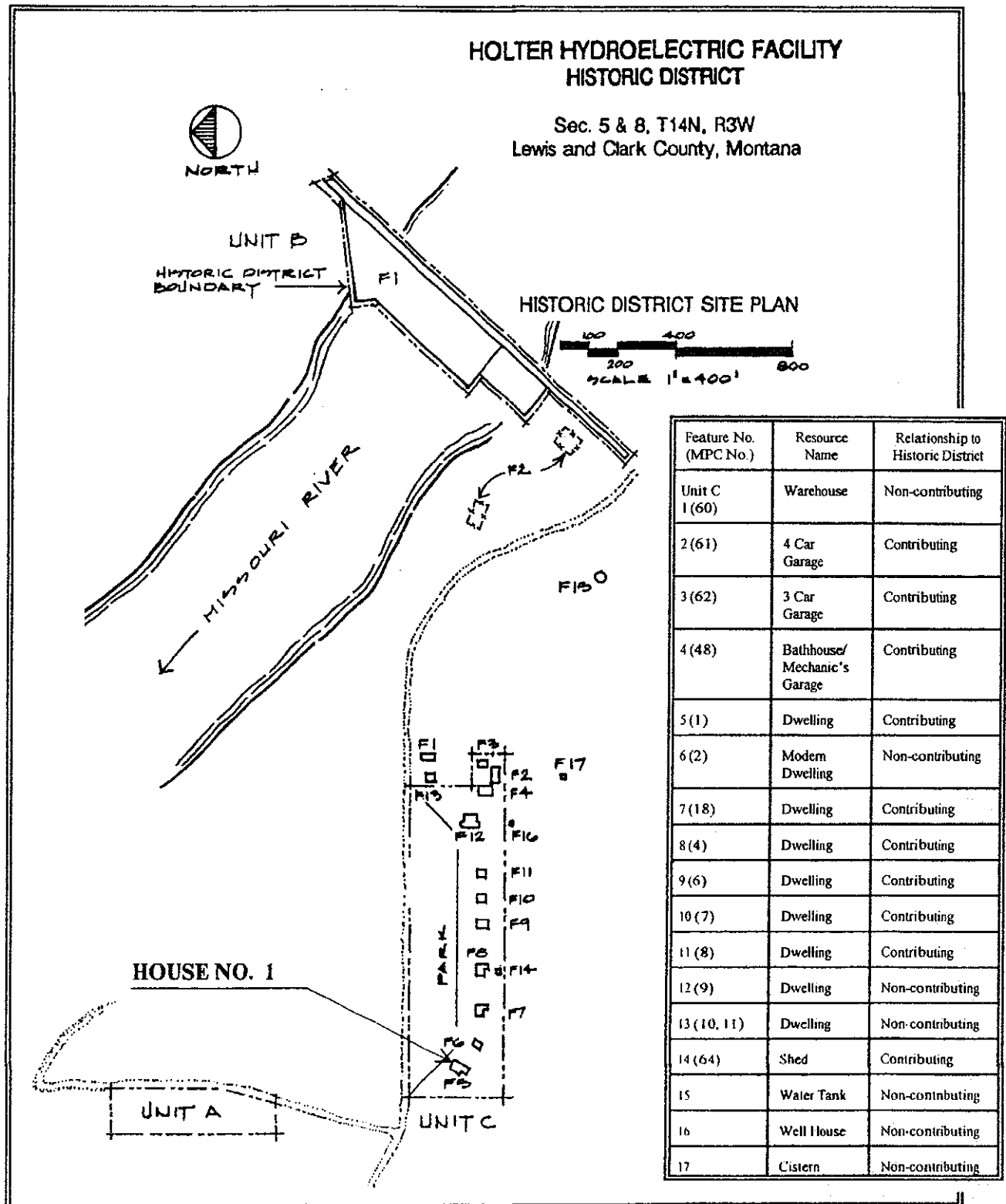


Figure 2. Holter Hydroelectric Facility Historic District.

corners, while 8" freize boards with bed molding delineate the wall juncture with the roof. A water table at the foundation is created by a slightly-projecting beveled drip above a 10" apron.

Most windows in the house are historic if not original elongated, double-hung units. A two vertical-over-two vertical light configuration predominates. Smaller, one-over-one, double-hung windows on the rear (southwest) and northwest sides of the house were likely installed when the building was covered into a duplex around the 1950s. All of the window openings have square-edge wood surrounds with a slightly projecting beveled drip at the hood.

The small, enclosed porch (6'9" x 15'5") at the front (northeast) facade likely was built after 1940, in place of the original full-width open structure. Offset toward the southeast, it is enclosed by windows and clapboard with the same 3" exposure as the siding on the house. The porch windows are wood-sash fixed units with a thin vertical muntin. A near-flat roof tops the porch; it is surfaced with interlocking asphalt shingles. The front wall has a wood-frame, half-light door featuring a dentil band at the window sill and three vertical rows of panels. Fronting this entry is a narrow concrete stoop with six stairs off the front.

Two other entries are on the building's southeast side. One of them opens into the rear wing, and the other serves as the side entry for the main block. Both hold, wood half-light doors with panels.

A bulkhead (5' x 12'10") stands against the southeast side of the rear wing, and encloses the stairs to the basement. It has narrow clapboard siding and a steeply-pitched shed roof that slopes to grade. The front (northeast) wall is full height and holds a wood door with five vertical panels.

A steeply-pitched, complex hipped roof tops the house. It includes a hip roof with a flat at the front or main block, and a simple hip with a short ridge at the rear wing. A gable ridge links the two hips; it runs well below the flat at the front roof. The truss system for the roof consists of 2x6s rafters on 18" centers. It supports board decking surfaced with interlocking asphalt shingles. The ridges are capped by galvanized ridge rolls with ball finials. Pressed-copper caps adorn the hip rafters. Eaves at the roof slightly flare and have a wide, open overhang underscored by decorative-cut rafter tails.

Although the front dormer at the roof was removed sometime after 1940, the rear dormer remains. It has a pyramid-shaped roof that displays the same finishing treatments as the main roof. Narrow, clapboard siding covers the walls, and there is a six-over-six, double-hung window behind a plywood cover.

The interior of House No. 1 reflects the duplex arrangement from the 1950s (Figure 3). Two kitchens occupy the south corner of the main block. A doorway has been opened between these rooms, providing the only interior access between the two former apartments. At the front of the house there is a livingroom and bedroom. A hallway leads to another bedroom and a bathroom on the northwest side. A second bathroom is off the back kitchen, and a storage room and a bedroom occupy the rear wing. The rear bedroom once was divided into two rooms by an interior wall, remnants of which remain at the ceiling. Although a few rooms display softwood floors, most of the other finishings date from the 1950s or later. The kitchen and bathroom fixtures are also modern.

The dormer on the roof encloses a single bedroom, the only finished room remaining at the house's upper level. Walls and the ceiling in the room are covered by fiberboard sheets. Battons cover the butt-ends of the sheets, creating a panel effect. Softwood strips are on the floor. An entryway is positioned on the interior wall. It no longer has a door, but the softwood surround is intact and includes square-edge trim with molding at the cap. Two wood-framed enclosures are just beyond the bedroom in the main area of the attic. One appears to have been a closet, while the other likely was the head of the stairs that once lead to the main level. However, the stairs have been removed so that the upper level now can only be reached via the window in the dormer. The remaining area is unfinished attic space.

The basement at the house is a single room measuring 15' square. Its walls and floor are finished with concrete. The ceiling is uncovered, exposing the flooring system at the main level. A metal post stands at the center of the room and supports a 5x7 ceiling beam. There is a low concrete bench along the room's northeast side.

IV. FUTURE OF THE PROPERTY

The Montana Power Company plans to demolish House No. 1 at the Holter Hydroelectric Facility (FERC Project No. 2188). The company has sponsored recording the building to the standards of the Historic American Engineering Record.

Holter Hydroelectric Facility,
House No. 1
HAER No. MT-94-C
Page 7

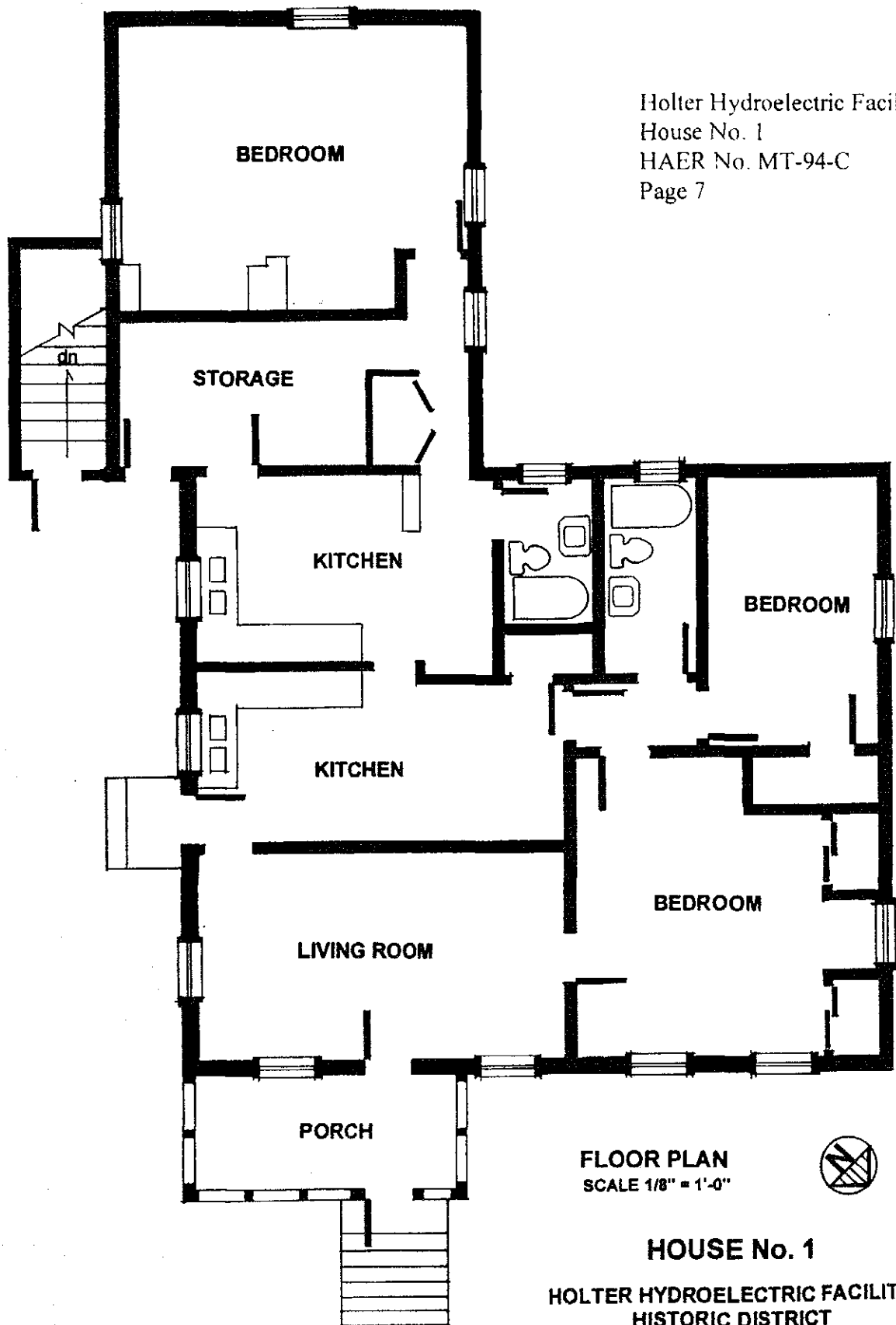


Figure 3. House No. 1 Floor Plan

V. ENDNOTES

1. House No. 1 is the hipped-roof building at the far right in photograph MT-94-A-7; and it is the last building at the right in the row of buildings right of center in photograph MT-94-B-7.

2. The Montana Power Company, "Index of Expenditures and Improvement Requisitions, Electric, For Years 1913 to Date," 1940, unpublished report on file at The Montana Power Company, Record Services, Butte.

3. Many of these modifications were noted in an inspection report completed for House No. 1 in the late 1930s, see The Montana Power Company, "Reclassification of Electric Plant, Vol. No. 1," 1 January 1937, unpublished report on file at The Montana Power Company, Property Accounting, Butte.

VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Montana Power Company. "General Plan of Holter Development, Reproduced from Stone & Wester Draw. No. R16100." 8 February 1916. Drawing No. 17304-E on file at The Montana Power Company, Hydro Engineering, Butte.

_____. "Index of Expenditure and Improvements Requisitions Electric, For Years 1913 to Date." 1940. Unpublished report on file at Record Services, The Montana Power Company, Butte.

_____. Photograph of the Holter construction camp, 30 August 1916. In "Holter I" photograph album on file at The Montana Power Company, Hydro Engineering, Butte.

_____. Photograph of the Holter construction camp, November 1917. Photograph at the Holter Hydroelectric Facility, vicinity of Wolf Creek.

_____. Photograph of dwellings at the Holter Plant, ca. 1918. Photograph on file at The Montana Power Company, Record Services, Butte.